Seattle Light Rail Review Panel
Meeting Notes for August 7, 2002

Agenda Items

- McClellan Station (contract 720) 60% presentation
- Henderson Street Improvements

Commissioners Present
Carolyn Law
Jack Mackie
Mimi Sheridan
Tom Bykonen

Staff Present
Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign
Kathleen Kern, CityDesign
John Rahaim, CityDesign

LRRP Business

Cheryl Sizov chaired the meeting. Dates for future LRRP meetings were discussed. Given the work schedule, it appears that there is no need for August 21, September 11, and September 18 meetings. It is possible to move the discussion of the North Link SEIS from December to September, but this was left unresolved. Next LRRP meeting would then be October 2, 2002.

McClellan 60% (Contract C720) Briefing

John Walser, Sound Transit
Darryl Turner, Boxwood Architects
Lee Copeland, Weinstein Copeland Architects
Sheila Klein, artist

John Walser of Sound Transit introduced the 60% design completion of Contract 720C, which includes Beacon Hill Tunnel Portal, McClellan Station, and the touch-down structure to MLK. Walser explained the background to today's presentation: 30% design was presented in November 2000, then the design team was put on hold in March 2001. Work resumed in February 2002, and currently (August 2002), they are presenting 60% design work. It is anticipated that 90% design will be ready by November 2002, and that 100% design will be done in February 2003. There will be construction scheduling issues at either end of the guideway (portal and touchdown).

Walser outlined the key differences between the 30% submission and the 60% design:

- The ARCO gas station, just east of McClellan Station, will no longer be a gas station; Sound Transit is purchasing the site's gas station usage rights. Safety issues (the proximity of gas tanks next to the light rail station) are cited as the primary reason for doing this.
- Stevens Street alley will be closed to public traffic, and will be used for delivery vehicles only (similar to Occidental Mall in Pioneer Square).
- The station is no longer 'solid' underneath the guideway. The station's TPSS (traction power sub-station) structures have been relocated from underneath the station to other locations (the 730 contract segment); (the signal room to walker). This opens up the area underneath the station for broader pedestrian circulation.

The bus station, however, is still across Rainer Avenue. Sound Transit is still discussing with Metro who will design it; it is not part of this design and construction package. The town center is now well accommodated by the opening up of the plaza underneath the station. There is now an opportunity to create a pedestrian mall that development can front onto. The status of the round-about at Rainer and MLK is uncertain, but this design can accommodate it or not. There are still coordination issues with the City (SDOT, Parks) on the final street layout, including: driveway for U.W. laundry, Cheasty boulevard and Winthrop.

(Calvin Chow: Final roundabout idea showed that there are too many impacts to Franklin fields, therefore it is off the table.)

Darrell Turner of Boxwood Architects presented the 60% station design. The station has not changed so much as evolved. The entire station has been pushed south to activate the south end. This creates a better axis to the pedestrian entry from Stevens. Paratrasit is on the west side and south end of the elevator tower. The main front door to the station is at the north end; secondary entrances are all around. Elevators are now in the center of the platform. Elevators, escalators, stairs and ticket vendors are located on either side of the arcade formed by the columns supporting the station. Smaller support spaces (janitor's closet) have shifted to underneath the primary support structure (i.e. underneath the stairs). The roof coverage of the platform is about 30% and there is a windscreen along the most of the platform, except for the end bays.

The sectional drawing shows that the area underneath the platform can be locked up and secured by rolling gates. In this area the intention is to provide the ground plane with lots of lighting, including ambient lighting. Glass block has been pulled down on the stairwell walls; the design team is still developing sheathing details for the stairwell. The architecture responds to the community desire for open, secure and safe spaces. The use of brick is borrowed from surrounding architecture (e.g. Franklin High school), but they are still working out the precise color and pattern. Pillars supporting the station emphasize the vertical expression of connections. They will likely treat columns differently at the station versus the stairwell. Glass block is used throughout the station – many of the vertical circulation elements are encased in glass block. The rendering shows the station at night; ambient lighting is emphasized in order to reduce glare.

Lee Copeland of Weinstein Copeland Architects presented the urban design for the station plaza, the portal and the touchdown structure. In the plaza area there is lots going on with the structure giving a strong vertical presence. The grid system of the plaza paving reflects the column spacing of the station structure. The infill of the plaza's paving is based on the standard 2' x 2' square grid of Seattle's sidewalks. People can move diagonally through the space. The U.W. laundry edge (the western edge) is planted for now but hopefully will be replaced by development over time. There is a vertical trellis along the Firestone (east) edge. Stevens Lane is quite wide, due to the fact that it still provides access for service vehicles, but future outdoor café space is quite possible.

At the Portal, the TPSS is adjacent to the tunnel entry. The hill is to remain essentially heavily forested. There is an existing street at the top of the hill.

The touchdown structure is 8 feet tall at the place where it touches down to MLK. There is a steel trellis along it to screen the concrete structure and help prevent graffiti . Concrete raised planting areas are around the perimeter to meet City requirements for jersey barriers and protect the corners of the structure. Under the guideway will be a raised checkerboard pattern of concrete pavers and plantings to discourage people from sleeping on this surface.

Artist Sheila Klein presented her work for the public art component of the project. The project is called "The Sky Within" and consists of a painted pattern along the 10 bays of the station ceiling formed by the box

girder system of the guideway. The project also includes a set of cobra head chandeliers at each end of the arcade under the station; the largest and brightest one will be at the entrance near Stevens. There is also an option to continue the cobra light theme by creating an allee of cobra-daisy lights along Stevens and into the plaza. Most of the cobra heads will be used for up lighting, and colored lenses (with no bulbs) will be used for the cobra heads that face down. The painted sky should be visible through the glass wall of the station. Klein envisions an arcade created by the rows of cobra head daisies that would be memorable. She also is thinking about 'ground pillows', a sort of cross between sculpture and a place to perch.

Discussion:

- Will the underside of the station be open 24/7? *Yes, except for the area between bays (which includes the elevator, stairs, escalators and ticket booths) that will be closed 1am – 5am).*
- What about security? *We don't know yet.*
- Is there any programming for that space? Without policing it could turn into a urinal. I'm concerned about the social quality of those spaces during closed times. What about providing potential for social activities, such as basketball?
- I think that this is a security concern, not a programming issue.
- But will there be people in this neighborhood during ST's closed times? *Don't know, the covered space may create a situation. Those issues will be resolved in a year – the security people will be coming up with a game plan for security. It is in Sound Transit's best interest to keep place safe and secure. If it is a problem, the area under the station could be filled in with commercial kiosks.*
- Vending could help even on an informal basis. Use carts. I would encourage vendor support. Doesn't help with the 1-5 am problem but the columns of the station should have power and possibly water. *We'll include hook-up potential in future iterations.*
- How tall are the columns / what is the height to the underside of the station? *It is 32'-33' tall to the platform. Under the girder is about 25', to the transom where the rolling grilles are is about 15'. Total height of the station is about 44'. The elevator towers are about 62'. The zoning envelope is 65'. This will dominate the space/area for a while until further development occur)*
- With respect to all the bulbs in the artwork, what is the plan for maintenance? *(Sculptural lenses in about ½ of the lights, the light will add to the painted surface, but they are not essential if one is burnt out. I don't really have it all figured out. Most of the bulbs can be reached by 12' ladders, for ease of maintenance.*
- Talk more about the chandelier. What is its scale and how do you propose to transform the cobra heads? *The project is really at the early stages. I love the form of the cobra heads – their organic ness - their relationship to both plant and animal forms. I am thinking about changing out the 'guts' of the cobra head and painting them. There will be a hierarchy of transformations: some will be au naturel, some will be painted, some functional and some sculptural . There is the possibility of using a mirrored surface on some of the arms. I like the idea of using standard arms but finessing them).*
- I'm curious about the context – cobra heads are ubiquitous. How do you defend the use of cobra heads in the town center? I can see them as appropriate on Royal Brougham, but curious about it here. *I find the cobra heads friendly and elegant, and surprising. I like the idea of taking something that is functional and turning it into something that is sculptural. The idea is to create a new context for the cobra heads and transform their meaning through reuse.*
- But cobra heads are really massive things. It is difficult to imagine them in that quantity and how they will impact the space. Not knowing how they will be detailed is a big part of whether they will work or not. I don't agree with bringing them into the allee – it could be too much.
- I think having them in the interior only is best. Create a big explosive ball with them like a dandelion – save the drama for the interior. You need to address the scale of the interior more. *I like the subtlety of weaving the cobra head lighting through the station and beyond, from a functional element to a sculptural one.*

- I have a question regarding the structure – How does the station building intersect with the track? With all those columns to hold up the station, why do you continue the box girder structure through the station? *We wanted to create a sense of continuity – a continuous thread from the portal to touchdown using the same box girder.* But your columns are supported 40' O.C., so do you really need the large box girder under the station? *There are two different contexts: one is for safety, security and efficiency and the other is for seismic requirements. It looks like a building but it is designed as a bridge. The site is an old lakebed so it is necessary to send the piles down 125' deep. The box could differ a little inside the station from outside. The bottom could be a different material, for example. We thought that seeing the guideway throughout is important for the system's identity.*
- Have you looked at the box girder shape as an architectural element? *No, just the original engineering requirements. With seismic requirements there is not much room to manipulate.* What about adding reveals? *Yes, there are some.*
- I would love to see a reflected ceiling plan for the arcade underneath the station. There is a chance to make a beautiful room inside this train barn. The interior needs to work as well as the exterior of the building. Don't end with the engineering requirements.
- The box girder could be shallower. The guideway continuity is already broken up by changing the column spacing. *We could raise up the ceiling, keeping the same profile.*
- I would like to see how the structure changes inside the station. You don't have to lose it; you can still have the continuity. *I don't see it as a room so much as a colonnade with people walking through from all sides.*
- Wouldn't changing the box girders to a different profile in the station mean less concrete and hence less cost? M*aybe.*
- I'm not convinced about the cobra head lighting. I would like to see a better (larger) scale model.
- I like the idea, but too literal is not good.
- This is a massive building for the area. It looks like a big ice cube. I'm not too sure if this is what the community wants. There is a need to warm it up; there's a 30' blank wall. Why not try different colors of brick, other sort s of detailing? The rendering(s) have a "film noir" quality to them; I think they need to be much more welcoming. This needs to be a place where someone will want to go.

Action

The Panel thanked Sound Transit and consultants for the presentation and expressed appreciation for the resolution of design issues previously mentioned by the Panel. The Panel showed particular support for:

- ***the direction of the "large train shed" design which is working well.***
- ***the approach of the building as arcade, interior room, and platform.***
- ***the design of Stevens Street and the purchase of the Arco site's gas station usage rights.***

The Panel further requested additional work on the following items prior to 90% review:

- ***We have serious questions and concerns regarding the public art, specifically the proposed cobra chandeliers and exterior lighting. The painted ceiling element is fine but seems lacking within the station context. We feel that the use of cobra lights is inappropriate in the context of this station. We ask that we see a more developed, better rendered and larger scale model and details. We recommend abstracting the cobra heads, and moving away from using them as functional objects, noting that the Panel members are not in agreement with the artist that using a found object as intended by the manufacturer is sufficient to make it art. Should the artist continue with the cobra head elements we suggest a more robust expression be investigated and presented. If the cobra***

heads chandeliers are to be used in the project, we recommend they be used exclusively in the interior and not carried outside of the station.

- *The large brick walls need to be broken down in scale and texture.*
- *We are not convinced of the expression of the box girder continuing through the station as the unifying element. We recommend investigating and expressing the actual engineering configuration that supports the platform. The Panel would like to see the team explore the enclosed portion of the station as a unique room with as much overhead open space as possible.*
- *The station building and its interior spaces need to be warmer and more welcoming.*
- *We recommend exploring the shape and dimension of the box girder within the station. Explore the concept of the area underneath the station as a "room."*
- *We have concerns regarding nighttime security issues: further work on this issue is needed.*
- *We have concerns about exactly how Stevens Street will work in terms of a service street: show us how the deliveries will be controlled (to avoid impacts on pedestrians during rush hour), and show where the dumpster(s) are for the restaurant(s).*

Henderson Street Improvements (Renton St. to Seward Park)

Barbara Gray of SDOT presented the plans for Henderson Street improvements. The design includes:

- Narrowing the street and creating wider sidewalks
- Better street lighting
- The addition of curb bulbs

Metro is responsible for ½ of the street improvements, and SDOT will also do some street improvements, but there is a gap between the overall plan and what Metro and SDOT are doing. The Sound Transit board voted to extend the Henderson Street Improvements to the lake but there is no extra money to build it. Two other projects coincide here: Mapes Creek, KC Metro CSO. The city is bringing forth this proposal to Sound Transit to encourage it to build the concept plan. SDOT is applying for transportation partnership funding in order to complete the project. The estimate budget gap is $1.6 million give or take $300,000. SDOT is going to push to get street trees. Some of the sidewalks are okay and do not need to be replaced; 5' sidewalks are mostly okay on this street. The plan is to reduce the width of the pavement by 6'. Sound Transit and SDOT have different priorities: Sound Transit is concerned about the sidewalks and lighting; SDOT is concerned about moving curbs.

Debora Ashland also presented further information. The landscaping is a top priority for Sound Transit. Narrowing the pavement and moving the curb has implications for drainage requirements. It is then a question of what are those costs, who bears them, and who will maintain the landscaping? Street-use at SDOT has required KC Metro to move the curb line. There is a Plan B: if they don't get funding via a grant, then SDOT will try to do something with its limited funds by 2009.

<u>Action</u>
The Panel thanked SDOT and Sound Transit for the presentation and expressed appreciation for street improvement design . The Panel showed particular support for:

- *The coordination attempts between the 3 jurisdictions (Sound Transit, SDOT and KC Metro); and*
- *The narrowing of the roadway and the addition of curb bulbs.*
- *Also, we encourage as many agencies to get involved in the grant process as possible.*

MLK Trackway Paving

Debora Ashland presented three design iterations for the trackway paving along MLK. There will be three slabs of concrete running parallel to one another. One design proposal has the slabs differentiated by texture and color in a block or checkerboard pattern; another has the slabs decorated with a wave pattern of differing texture and differing color; and the third has a combination of waves and blocks. Ashland explained that due to the desire to reduce the construction time of the trackway – and hence the closure time on MLK – Sound Transit would prefer a solution which did not require a long cure time for the concrete, or for work that would be done after the concrete cured (e.g. staining).

Action
The Panel thanked Sound Transit for the presentation. The Panel showed particular support for:

- ***The 'wave' iteration of the trackway design.***
- ***While the Panel appreciates the desire to limit construction time, we would also like to remind Sound Transit that this is a type of construction that is worth doing right, as it is permanent (or at least very long-lasting).***

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.